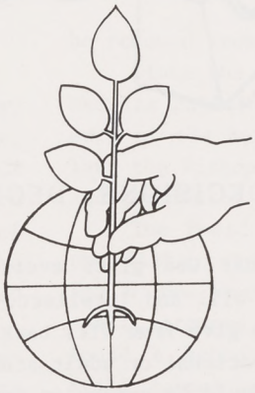
BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

TO THE CHURCH

TO THE WORLD

journey

OCTOBER 1984



THE NEXT 16 YEARS

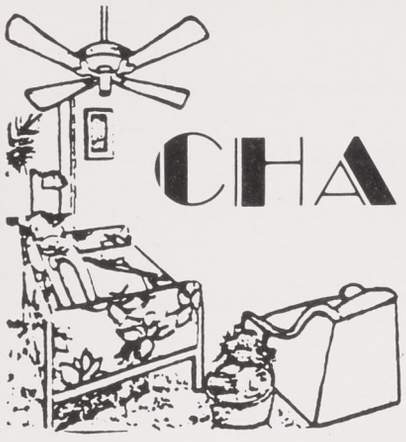
EXCEL

THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

GOD, GAYS & THE GOSPEL: This is OUR story.

I Love W.C.E.*

***World Church Extension**



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Nancy Radclyffe

Collective Writer and Senior Chaplain

DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS

I was taught that God gives everyone two very special gifts: free will and intellect. Well, sometimes I would like to give free will back to God. Oh, I know that isn't a rational or adult statement but it seems as if my life would be easier on many occasions.

Have you ever felt that if you have to make one more free will decision in the course of a day that you would scream? If you have never felt that way... thank God. I feel that way more times than not and according to my many calls around the Fellowship I am in good company.

What is it that makes us want to just let go and have someone or something take over the direction of our lives? Now I am not talking about surrendering to God but surrendering to just about anything or anyone rather than having to make a decision.

Exercising free will means in part being a moral person and keeping the rules. Free will means doing the right thing, not upsetting the apple cart and being all things to all people. That is not only hard, it is impossible. Free will does not mean perfection, it is a capacity to strive to make right and meaningful choices. However there are so many rules, laws and operating principles that have been established by a vague and distant body of people that it is up for grabs whether or not free will is operative. It develops into a struggle between pressure and pressure.

This article is not a paper on moral theology but a friendly chat about how it is all right to feel less than perfect, less than adequate, less than what everyone around expects. Of course the other extreme of never striving to exercise one's intellect and free will is equally as debilitating.

But for those of you in leadership positions who are faced with having to decide which member of the congregation needs your attention the most, for those of you who have five projects going at once and for the many of us who seem to have to work at spending time being in concert with Christ rather than overburdened doing Christians things, God understands when no one else does.

I am telling you throw in the towel sometimes and take time to smell the flowers or count the cracks in the ceiling or play hookey and go to the movies. Because if you don't the stress factor will begin to build to the point that you will be incapable of exercising free will. The world will become zombies and robots and then you and I will have to compete to be the best zombie or robot in our congregations.

Summer has drawn to a close and most of you have not taken a vacation. There is no time, there is no money, there is no one to cover your absence. Of course there is. You make the time, watching sunsets and counting clouds doesn't cost anything and there is always someone who would give their all to be asked to lead the worship service and/or preach. But the phones have to be answered. Recruit a volunteer, insist that the church pay for "call forwarding," spread the word that it is crucial for the church to acquire an answering machine with remote control. Sounds foolish, extravagant, or I bet you are saying that's easy for you to say but you aren't here. I have been there and when I finally gave up trying to use up my free will rather than exercising it in a meaningful way things started to become reasonable rather than crippling.

When we fail to know what to do we can exercise the last breath of our free will by simply turning to God and asking for help. Trust God to help still your emotions, to give you a small boost of energy for your sake rather than for someone else's sake and to be there to hold you in loving arms and calm your tensions.

Now if I can only practice what I write how much better tomorrow is going to be. If you find ways to make your tomorrow better let me know and I will gladly share them with others. It is my prayer for each of you to acknowledge free will as a gift rather than a chore, an opportunity rather than a headache and a coveted prize rather than a state of despair.

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journey

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INSIDE

2 Chaplains Corner
3 Gay Pride - Mexico City
4 Gay Man's Health Experience - IV
6 Connection
7 Finding Judgment
8 Nexus of Politics
9 Fellowship News
17 Falwell Challenge
19 Mixed Blessings

COVER: Paula J. Schoenwether

GAY PRIDE PARADE IN MEXICO CITY

By Nancy Wilson
Collective Writer

Mexico City held their Gay pride parade this year on Saturday, June 30--this was the 3rd time ICM Mexico City participated in the 6th such parade in Mexico. A total of 1,000 persons marched, ICM, who helped organize the parade, had their largest contingent ever.

Our Church in Mexico City continues to flourish despite the setback of the loss of their place of meeting earlier this year. Many of you have heard the story. ICM Mexico City met in the Episcopal Cathedral down town. An evangelical Mexican senator was passing by the church as ICM was having worship services. He was attracted by the boisterous singing and wondered inside. After the singing, he heard the testimonies of Gay and Lesbian Christians! He became enraged and called the Angelican Bishop of Mexico City, the Rt. Rev. Jose Saucedo and insisted that ICM be removed from the premises.

Since the Angelican church can use its building only at the pleasure of the Mexican government, by law, the Bishop reacted immediately and terminated ICM's lease.

The Board of Elders wrote to the Bishop expressing our dismay. For a few weeks, ICM met in its small, cramped offices. Then they found a school to meet in, that still cannot accommodate the over 200 crowd they had been experiencing.

This experience, though discouraging at times, has only strengthed the resolve of our brothers and sisters of ICM. They are looking at the possibility of buying a building in the near future.

Three student clergy from ICM Mexico City attended the Samaritan "Orientation to MCC Pastoring" in Dallas, TX--Horacio Flores (Worship Coordinator of ICM), Felix Escami-

continued on page 17

DIOS NO HACE DIFERENCIA ENTRE UNA PERSONA Y OTRA...
*HECHOS 10:34
DIOS ES AMOR
DIOS NO AMA CRISTO ES PARA TODOS
SOMOS HOMOSEXUALES CRISTIANOS

ICM Mexico City participates in the Gay Pride Parade with 1,000 people marching to celebrate the event.

aids...

A Gay Man's Health Experience

Part IV

by Steve Pieters
Collective Writer

Many people have asked me what they can do for Persons With Aids (PWA's). Some want specifics of what they can do individually for someone they know who has aids. Others want to know what their local churches can do. Some friends outside of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches have been curious about what UFMCC is doing. UFMCC passed two resolutions at our General Conference in Toronto in the summer of 1983. They are both good, strong statements which can serve as a basis for a discussion about what can be done in the aids crisis. Resolution #11 was offered by the church I belong to, MCC in the Valley, in North Hollywood, CA., It reads:

Resolution #11

Recognizing our responsibilities as a community of believers, we do now declare our support for those individuals with AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome): that we affirm to them, as well as their spouses, families and friends, our readiness to give assistance and comfort to them in whatever ways possible.

Recognizing the value and importance of human contact within any community, we, the UFMCC, pledge that, collectively and individually, we will offer our staffs and congregations to those who suffer pain and despair as a result of this condition; that we will offer comfort through hope; that we will bring communion and prayer; that we will assist in alleviating any and all problems through the sharing of the love of God wherever and whenever possible.

Sponsored by MCC in the Valley
North Hollywood, CA.

This is a good basic statement. It is our responsibility, I believe, to be present wherever the quality of life is at question, and certainly the quality of life, indeed life itself, is threatened whenever anyone is stricken with a disease such as aids. It is important to remember that we must offer hope and assistance to family, spouses, and friends, as well as to PWA's.

Many people have been good about reaching out to my birth family, as well as my immediate MCC family. I had often heard in my chaplain training that it is more difficult for the people around a person with cancer than it is for the person with cancer. The same can be said for situations involving aids. Watching a loved one progress through what can be a deteriorating disease is, to say the least, stressful.

Offering "comfort through hope" is very important, and undoubtedly a gift that MCC'ers can offer through our faith. In an effort to be "realistic" and "factual," health care professionals don't often offer a great deal of hope to PWA's Medical personnel will, in my experience, say alarming things, which, when thought through a faith perspective, are not so alarming.

Twice people in the medical field have given me prognosis about "how long I have." They were very different estimates, and I feel that it is very difficult, if not impossible to "crystal-ball" this kind of information. The doctors and nurses who try don't seem to take into account the individual personality, the ability to fight back, and most obviously, they do not (in my experience, at least) give much credence to the power of faith, and the power of God to heal and alleviate pain. So it is important for MCC to offer the hope of faith in God to PWA's.

I also would like to stress the importance of bringing communion to PWA's who may be hospitalized or house-bound. Communion is a visible sign of inclusion in the community. It is a connection to the on-going life of the community. When I have been house-bound, I have needed that connection desperately: that sense of being fed by God through the communion of my church family.

Resolution #12 was offered by the Board of Elders, and is much more extensive; so I would like to share this resolution through a kind of "commentary" process, presenting one section of the resolution at a time.

Resolution #12

BE IT RESOLVED that the UFMCC, recognizing the interrelated nature of wellness of mind, body and spirit and the historic responsibility of the Church of Jesus Christ to pastor, educate and militate (where necessary) shall, as a body, respond to the AIDS crisis in a variety of ways:

1) PASTORAL CARE AND LEADERSHIP - This may be the area of greatest need and our greatest gifts. The UFMCC and its clergy and its congregations shall prepare ourselves to provide active pastoral care for persons with AIDS, and persons impacted by the AIDS crisis (significant persons in the life of the person with AIDS and the helping persons involved). This care will be on a one to one basis and in the form of support groups. We know that it is God's will that NO person suffer alone and isolated. Further, we commit ourselves to address the urgent spiritual issues arising from illness and death - including unresolved guilt, fear, self-hatred and internalized homphobia.

Indeed, pastoral care is an area of great need. While there are many people (therapists, social workers and medical personnel) who deal with spiritual issues in their work with PWA's, we in UFMCC are obviously qualified to bring active pastoral care on an individual basis in a way that no medical staff in my experience has been able to offer.

Facilitating support groups for PWA's is also important. I have learned a great deal through the sharing I have experienced in the support group sponsored by aids project/LA. All Saints MCC in West Hollywood provides the space for this group. While groups like this exist in major urban areas, MCC's could be providing groups like this in smaller areas, and not only for PWA's but for the "worried well" too. Hopefully, MCC'ers with skill and experience in group facilitation will be able to help establish mediation, spirituality, and prayer groups for interested people.

It would be nice if all PWA's had a thoroughly internalized sense of Gay pride, but we experience as much struggle with internalized homophobia as anyone. Some PWA's that I have met are not out to their families about being Gay, and they are similarly not "out" yet about having aids, not only to family, but sometimes to friends as well.

Some PWA's express great anger at the Gay community. Two men who read my article about Gay pride and aids said that they could not relate because they were too angry at the community who supposedly gave them this disease. They had bought into the Gay urban celebration of sexuality, feeling free finally to indulge fantasies, and live the Gay lifestyle protrayed in Gay media and literature of the seventies; and now they are dying because of it. MCC needs to be present to PWA's, to counteract the internalized homophobia and any feelings of guilt, fear and self-hatred that might be present.

The psychiatrist who is in charge of the support groups at aids project/LA told a class at Samaritan that the greatest spiritual need for most PWA's is a sense of self-acceptance and a sense of forgiveness. I would reaffirm that and add that dealing with the fears involved with having aids (fear of pain, fear of dying and death, fear of bodily deterioration, fear of isolation) is an area that people who minister can help with their loving presence. I continue to discover the ways in which love overcomes fear.

And further, we commit ourselves to be vigilant, outspoken opponents of any theology that even suggests that any disease is God's divine earthly retribution against any individual or group; and we resolve to preach, teach and proclaim God's loving, healing power and desire for our health and happiness.

Most people in UFMCC would agree with the opening statement of this paragraph. Yet I still hear MCC'ers making terribly judgmental statements about aids being visited upon "fast-laners," or that "they are only getting what they asked for." I hear myself praised for my obvious faith because I look so healthy and am remaining fairly active. Does this mean that PWA's who are sick in the hospital do not have enough faith? Does it mean that should my disease progress, my faith was not great enough? When I hear talk about Christians being beyond illness and death, I worry that when someone in that congregation comes down with aids, they are going to be treated as if they asked for it and are in obvious need of conversion.

My experience in MCC is that people do not usually act like this, but I do hear this attitude in some preaching and some prayer and I worry about that. I have enough people stigmatizing me because I have a lethal sexually transmitted disease, that I do not need my church family behaving judgmentally towards me. I believe that God is loving, healing, powerful, wants health and happiness for us all.

But good Christian people do get sick and die. It does not mean that they failed God, or lacked faith, or that God failed them. It simply means that they got sick and died. So what role does faith play in illness? I believe that whether or not God heals me of my illness, my faith will affect my attitude and my ability to cope with whatever is in store for me. Why good people suffer is as old a question as any religion. The aids crisis confronts us with it anew.

There are heavy theological issues being raised here and I am coming at it from the emotional perspective of someone who is being forced to deal with this disease on a daily basis. I hope that there will be more discussion about these theological issues through the Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission.

At the Clergy Conference in Kansas City I raised the question at the FFO workshop as to why, in

continued on page 17

CONNECTION

UFMCC's THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS
by Ravi Verma

One of the challenges and opportunities for UFMCC has consistently been our rapid growth. From 12 people worshiping in Los Angeles in 1968 we have grown today to over 230 churches in nine countries. As we prepare to enter the 21st century, there will be many more opportunities to share our message in countries and with people of different religious experience and faith, of other cultures and lifestyles. How will we face this challenge? In other words, what is or will be UFMCC's Theology of Missions? That is a question that many different voices in our Fellowship are asking.

I want to share with you some insights on this question, based on my own experience. My family in India is a traditional middle class Hindu family. We celebrated many Hindu festivals at home and temples with our extended family and neighbors . I remember my parents spending some part of every morning in prayer and meditation. We often went to listen to discourses by learned "gurus." I also studied for 12 years in a school, in Bombay, run by Jesuits from Italy. We kids often attended mass celebrated by these priests in a huge beautiful gothic church, alongside my school. Their rituals and words, though fascinating in their difference, did not mean much to us.

I came to the U.S. for graduate studies and gradually came to terms with my sexuality. (That, in itself, is another story!) Later in Pittsburgh, Pa. I found a community and a spiritual home in MCC Pittsburgh. I was also working as a technical manager and could finally afford to visit my family in India in 1979.

It had been six years since I had left home. I had to struggle with myself about coming out to my parents about my sexuality and about my Christianity. Many well meaning people at General Conference in Los Angeles were convinced that I was to be a "knight in shining armor" to spread "the message" to my family and others.

The reunion, was a first, wonderful--especially seeing my nephews and nieces! Soon though my family started pressuring me about my marriage plans and about my close friends in the States. It was soon clear that for me to maintain my integrity and to be authentic with my family I had to be open with them about my faith and my sexuality. As you can imagine both these issues were very hard for them to deal with. We all spent hours talking, fighting, crying and struggling to hear and to love each other.

While in India, I also visited Indian Christian churches and my Jesuit teachers and attempted to engage them in dialogue. It was my way of seeing which doors would open. Most people I talked with did not perceive sexuality issues to be amongst the important ones they had to deal with and I did not find any ready audience. However, I did find several Indian Christian communities that had services conducted by Indians--the worship setting was similar to Hindu temples, the language and music were of Indian origin.

This experience was a powerful one for me and has helped enormously to integrate my own faith. My dialogue with my friends and family was equally enlightening. Trying to explain concepts of "salvation", "sin," "redemption" was not easy. (I too, had had to struggle with these terms). It did open a lively dialogue regarding Hinduism and Christianity. At the end of my visit most of my family had a growing respect and acceptance of my faith and its relevance to my life. I too, had begun reclaiming my Hindu heritage and thereby enriching my own spiritual life and faith.

In 1983 my parents visited me in Pittsburgh, Pa. and we continued healing and strengthening the bonds between us.

Through my experience, I am beginning to formulate my own sense of my "mission" in regard to my friends and family at home. This has involved studying, dialogue and prayer. I believe we in UFMCC need to be doing the same. The following paragraphs attempt to articulate some of the issues that are involved.

The word mission has its roots in the "Latin meaning sent." The question for us is, sent for what? To do what? The history of missionary activity is not one to be proud of. It has at worst involved manipulating/coercing/inviting people to accepting white western Christianity with little regard to local culture, religion and lifestyle.

More recently, a number of the mainline denominations have attempted to answer the questions, "Sent for what? To do what?" in more relevant and authentic ways. Two aspects of these new answers are embodied in the words "dialogue" and "mutuality." In the richest sense this means immersing yourself in a lifestyle and culture to dialogue with the experience of another race/culture/religion in order to discover how the people experience God and how their faith relates to the ultimate mysteries of life. This implies a mutuality of respect and appreciation for the validity and value of the experi-

continued on page 7

finding judgment?

CHECK OUT YOUR OWN LIFE

by Rev. Bob Arthur
Collective Writer

One of the most frequently used Bible passages used to condemn Gays and Lesbians who claim to be Christian is Romans 1. We have dealt with that passage in previous articles. However, the first rule of Bible interpretation is to read texts in their context. The context of chapter 1 continues through chapter 2. I have taken some liberty in translating Romans 2:1-11 as follows:

Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse; for in that which you are judging the other person, you are condemning yourself, for you who are judging are doing the same things. Now we know that such things. But do you who judge those who do such things while doing despising the richness of God's goodness, willingness to put up with, and patience, not realizing that it is that very kindness of God which brings you to repentance?

But by your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up for yourself punishment on the day of punishment, and the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, who will reward everyone according to their works; on the one hand, God will reward with eternal life those who are seeking glory, honor and immortality by continuing in good work; but on the other hand, those who, out of selfishness, disobey the truth and follow after unrighteousness, punishment and anger--every human life which expends energy practicing evil, God will reward with tribulation and distress, not only the Jew first, but also the Gentile; but God will reward every one who works for good with glory, honor and peace, not only the Jew first, but also the Gentile; for there is no partiality with God.

This is a passage that the Jerry Falwell's and Mary Whitehouse's of the world conveniently overlook in their diatribes against us. Yet it is one we quote to them in rebuttal. Let me basically outline the content of this passage as applied to these people:

I. Why do they judge us?
   A. It makes them look better than us
   B. They are impatient for God's judgment
   C. Selfishness
II. Results of their judging
   A. Turn people away from God and the Church
   B. Store up their own judgment
III. Our recommendation to them
   A. Emulate God's patience which leads to salvation
   B. Work together for common Christian good

Neat passage, huh? Great to use against the Falwell's and Whitehouse's. But in so doing, are we falling into the same trap? How often do you go through an entire Sunday in an MCC congregation without hearing gossip, criticism and other judgmental remarks about other members of MCC? If this passage is good for the crusaders, is it not also applicable to ourselves?

In a recent sermon on this subject to my own congregation, I made the following suggestion: the next time you are tempted to criticize or judge someone else, check your own life first, to see if the same problem exists in yourself in another form: Then go to that person and admit your own fault and ask them to help you with it. In the process of dealing with your own fault they will see theirs as well and so both of you will benefit, and neither of you will fall prey to Romans 2:1-11. If it's good for them, it's good for us, too.

SHARE YOUR "GOOD NEWS" WITH OTHERS

JOURNEY would like to feature some human interest stories in the future. Has some individual or group in your church gone out of their way to be of Christian service? Had a unique or interesting ministry? Deserve to be recognized for their selfless and giving attitude? Please let us share it with others. Submit material to: *JOURNEY* 5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

continued from page 6

ence of others. It implies an openness to the ways in which God has been working in religious/cultures other than white western Christianity.

As we prepare for the future, we too will have to develop UFMCC's "theology of missions." We too will have to decide the answer to "Sent for what? To do what?".

In order for an authentic answer and enlightened consciousness to emerge, we need to be studying/discussing these questions at all levels in our Fellowship.

We also need to develop plans, structures, processes and personnel to lead us in this process. I am confident that as we do this, God will continue to open more doors for us and provide opportunities to be an authentic and relevant presence in countries and with peoples all over this world. In so doing, we will enrich our own spiritual lives and faith.

The Nexus of Politics and Faith

By Chris Glaser
Collective Writer

Americans are no strangers to political tragedies: harsh, tragic and demoralizing ends to promised new beginnings. From assasinations to resignations, from disenfranchisement to apathy, great causes have suffered at the hands of everything from mentally unstable individuals to tyrannical majorities. Our cause serves as case in point: Harvey Milk downed by an enraged Dan White: Lesbian and Gay rights defeated by popular vote in various municipalities.

What can people of faith do about it?

Spokespersons of the religious right, abusing the word "conservative" as if it applied to them command Christians to involve ourselves in the political process. I do not believe they are wrong for doing so; I do, however, disagree with their baptism of reactionary viewpoints as Christian. Christianity must be characterized by its compassion; any policy which would disenfranchise, exploit or kill is patently unChristian. The church and the society we choose to shape must be characterized by inclusiveness, cherishing political diversity and expression, but must reject policies which disenfranchise, exploit or kill, because these lead to political tragedy.

For two thousand years, Christians have been confronted with the mystery of a political tragedy. Every Sunday we are reminded of that political tragedy when we look at the cross. The death of Jesus Christ was a political tragedy. And yet it is also God's way of saying, "I understand. I identify with your tragedy. I suffer with you."

There are some who would say, "People of faith don't belong in politics." Yet if the story of the Gospel centered in the greatest political tragedy of all time does not prick <u>your</u> conscience and set a fire under <u>your</u> pew to get you involved actively in affecting the social and political conscience of this nation and the world, then the incarnation of God's will for the world ended with the cross, and it becomes a symbol of ultimate tragedy.

Because the nexus, the "tie that binds," the bond which weds politics and faith, is the cross. Political tragedy occurs when life is taken or denied an individual or a social justice movement. Faith comes into play because the valuing of God-given life (with its right to justice) is the concern of faith. Consequently, anything which interferes with life is what faith must adamantly oppose: whether bullets, missiles or toxic wastes, inequitable distribution of the world's goods, resources and opportunities, or the removal of human rights through discrimination, legislation, torture or execution.

Some one once described Christian political action with this illustration: A person is hit by a car in front of the church. Christian compassion means caring for the victim during the interim waiting for the arrival of the paramedics. But they take too long to get there, and the person's condition worsens as a result. Christian political action occurs when later we investigate why the paramedics were delayed, and then find ways to correct the problem.

For the person of faith, however, faith must have the upper hand in the nexus of politics and faith. Politics cannot be allowed to control, limit, retard or paralyze faith--whether it be politics within society or politics within the church. God's higher law must reign supreme for the person of faith, and ultimately that higher law is one of justice <u>and</u> mercy. If we do not recognize its sovereignty, then we have learned nothing from the cross, and the cross is all with which we are left. To get beyond the cross to the resurrection, our faith must transcend politics. If our faith is held down by politics, then the nexus of politics and faith becomes a cross, ready to crucify any movement of the Spirit.

This is the pathetic nature of Jerry Falwell, for he has sacrificed the movement of the Spirit for the rigidity of a certain political viewpoint he reads into Scripture. His politics keeps him from being faithful to the Spirit.

Equally pathetic are those who claim themselves to be "above politics" by virtue of their faith. Immoral ignorance blinds them to the political nature of common, ordinary acts: drinking coffee tacitly approves of current U.S. policies in Central and South America; drinking alcohol or eating red meat, as inefficient uses of the world's grain resources, contribute to hunger in the world; purchasing or wearing diamond rings support apartheid in South Africa, where most diamonds are mined. No one's faith or spirituality prevents one from being political.

Jesus transformed a common, ordinary act of sharing bread and wine into an act of faith, a sacrament through which we may experience God's presence. Similarly, God can transform a common, ordinary political act into an act of faith, a sacrament through which we may experience God's presence, whether it is boycotting a product or choosing a president. As we approach the November elections, I

continued on page 17

fellowship news

our journey

CHARLESTON MISSION DEDICATES SANCTUARY

St. Joan of Arc MCC recently dedicated their new Sanctuary and Rectory. Leasing a slightly battered two story house in downtown Charleston, S.C. members and friends of the Church spent weeks patching, painting and cleaning, and turning a roach-infested building into an MCC Center.

Carpet was laid, (as was rat poison) windows replaced and meaningful times shared as the work progressed. The first floor was converted into a sizeable chapel, fellowship area, classrooms and office.

The second floor was prepared as a home for Revs. Harris and Kromer, including a guest room for visiting clergy seeking a place of spiritual retreat. A large garden with lawns and tall trees used for picnics and outdoor services.

A solemn Liturgy of Dedication took place on July 29th with 46 folk in attendance including Clergy from several local Episcopal Churches, notably Rev. Connie Belmore, Charleston's first woman Priest.

St. Joan of Arc Gregorian Choir chanted the "Shema Ysroel" as part of the ceremonies and of course in true MCC style, the Choruses combined with incense on this joyful occasion.

On Aug 5th, Rev. Stan Harris was invited to celebrate the same Rites at New Life MCC Study Group Charlotte N.C. as they also dedicated their new facility.

In addition, Harris & Kromer celebrated their seventh anniversary of their Holy Union on Aug 27th.

Dedication of new sanctuary at St. Joan of Arc MCC in Charleston, S.C.

BRING A FRIEND TO MCC OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

A special effort was given in August to reach out to new friends to fill the chairs at worship services. Church advertisements appeared in both daily newspapers designed to inform incoming students about the MCC ministry. Invitation cards were ordered for every member to use in inviting friends and acquaintances to services. The major special activity for the month was a congregational carry-in dinner on August 26.

MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The Mid-Atlantic District Conference for Fall, 1984 will be held in Philadelphia during the weekend of Friday, October 19th. The theme for the Conference will be "Relationship to God in Neighbor and Self."

The keynote address will be "Relationship as Friendship" given by Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull. This will be followed by concurrent workshops on "Relationship with Family" and "Relationship with Lover." After lunch concurrent workshops will be "Relationship with the Political System" and "Relationship with Congregation."

VIRGINIA MOLLENKOTT AT MCC PHILADELPHIA

Dr. Virginia Mollenkott, author of The Divine Feminine: Biblical Imagery of God as Female, gave a major address "New Age Lifestyles" September 21st at MCC of Philadelphia.

continued on page 10

In her writing Dr. Mollenkott has invited us to look at the Biblical images of God as bakerwoman, Dame Wisdom, mother hen, mother eagle, female homemaker, mother bear, midwife, nursing mother, woman giving birth and other maternal activities.

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The MCC contingent in the National March for Lesbian/Gay rights in San Francisco. (photo by Steve Warren)

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Following the service at which Dr. Rosemary Radford Reuther was preacher, the cathedral full of people adjourned for a march down to the hotel hosting the Falwell/Schlafly conference. With all of our colorful religious banners flying in the breeze and all of the various religious groups' colorfully vested clergy among the celebrating crowd, we sang "Jesus Love Me" and began the 48-hour prayer vigil at the hotel.

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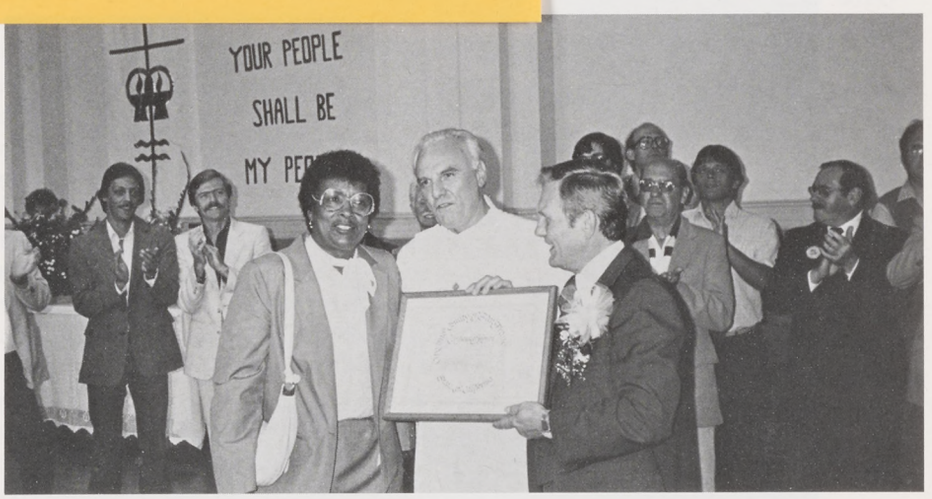

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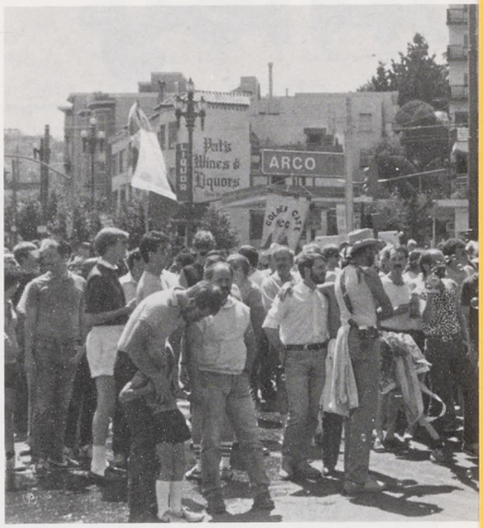

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northern Orange County. The mailing address has been changed to:

P O Box 6
Garden Grove, CA
92641-0006

The telephone number remains the same at (714) 636-6505. Eucharist will continue at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday.

Due to a series of complications, the lease of the previous facility could not be renewed, leaving the congregation with a notification of one month to locate a new facility.

The new and larger facility is a store located in an easily accessible shopping center four blocks from the Garden Grove Freeway and air conditioned.

The new facility will be made available to various not-for-profit groups in the Orange County area who may need a place to meet. Aerobics classes have begun on Tuesday evenings and a Bible Study is in progress on Thursday evenings. As a result of the Annual Congregational Meeting in July, a commitment was drafted to develop a staff of personnel to conduct both on and off campus ministries. A program is in formation to staff the telephone on a regular basis.

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MCC LAS VEGAS FINDS NEW MEETING PLACE

MCC of Las Vegas, as a whole, took a giant step on June 24th. The congregation voted 20 to 1 in favor of leasing the building at 1119 S. Main St. as our new Church home.

The new building is approximately 6,000 sq. ft. This will give the church an opportunity for its outreach to the community. More than one event can be planned at the building at the same time. There is parking on the street.

The Board met earlier on the 24th to discuss what would be needed over the next year to get the new building into condition. Not including rent and utilities the estimated figure was: $25,000 and 2500 work hours. The Board felt that the congregation had to make a strong commitment to even consider taking the building.

Before voting on the matter, there was a provision made in the motion that each member at the meeting pledge what they felt they could give, (both in dollars and in work hours) over the next year; above and beyond their regular tithing. If there was not a strong commitment for at least 2500 work hours, and $5,000 we would not make the move. Well---over 3,000 hours and $7,890 was pledged!

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS UPDATE

Now, we know all of us will believe it when we see it but by job, I think we've done it...or "who'd a thunk it."

The members of the GSS Commission met this past month in Ft. Lauderdale for our second week long meeting this year. We worked long hard hours and feel that we have a proposal, that with some added polish, might be the completion of a very long process.

The commission (founded in

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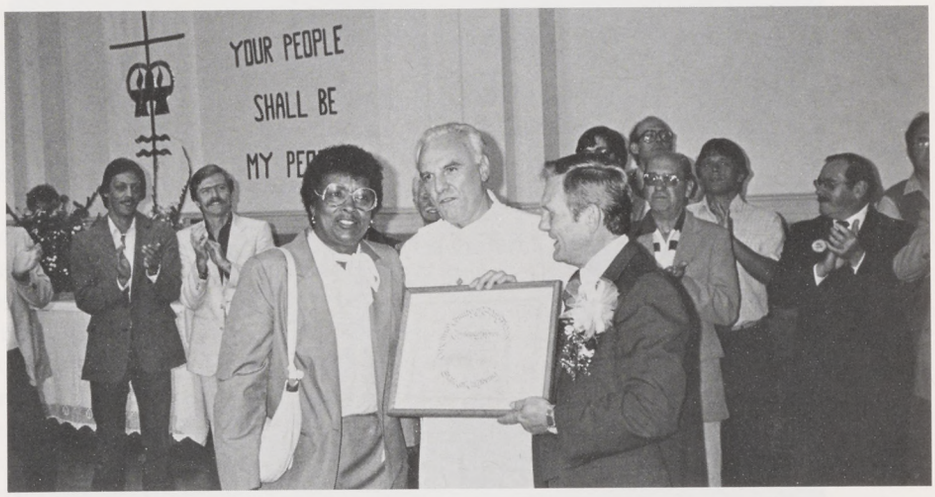

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1975) has the ongoing responsibility for critiquing and reforming Fellowship structure and polity, so that it adequately meets the growing needs of the Fellowship.

The commission has been working since 1981 on Article 5 and 6 of the UFMCC By-Laws, which concern the tri-level Fellowship structure; the nature of the Board of Elders; Districts and local church government.

In developing this document we have taken to heart the feedback from all of the workshops, occurring Fellowship-wide. Our next meeting will happen in January in Orlando, FL. Here we hope to finish up the document from your input after the fall district conferences and to develop the implementation package which will accompany the proposal.

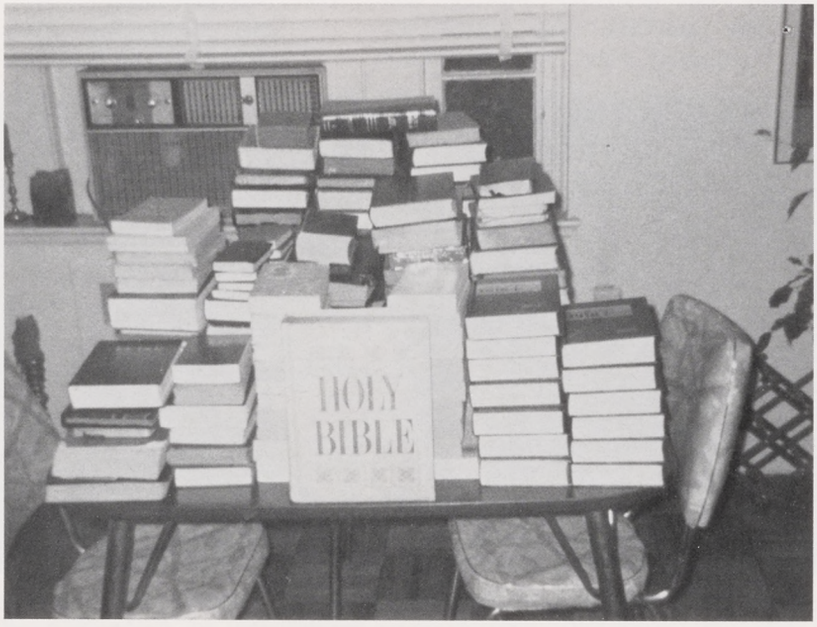
The commission works very intense hours and then we play together. All of our time together was a blessing and it is our sincere wish that our work will bless all of our lives. See you in Sacramento...you'll believe it when you see it!!!

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT COMMISSION ON LAITY

This commission met on July 14 to begin planning for a continuing network of lay involvement in the South Central District and further enabling the ministry of the laity. The commission is chaired by District Lay Representative John Kirkland with alternate District Lay Representative JoNee Shelton serving as the assistant chair. Members of the Commission are: Lisa Franke of MCC Corpus Christi; Bonnie Guy, Mid-Cities MCC of Arlington; Beverly Forrest of Christ the King MCC, Oklahoma City; Jack Folds of MCC of Acadiana, Lafayette and Martha Alcala of Midland/Odessa MCC, Midland.

During their day of deliberations, the Commission explored several possible areas of lay ministry and enablement, including developing a handbook that would define and offer guidelines on such vital question and issues as: What is a board of directors and what are the roles and responsibility; the duties & responsibilities of lay delegate(s); guidelines and function of a pastoral search committee; encouragement of continued ministry to our clergy and development of a district-wide prayer chain.

General Conference in Toronto adopted a resolution mandating that the lay deligate(s) in each congregation is also the lay representative. Congregations that have more than one delegate must select one of their delegates to serve as the local church Lay Representative.



The Mid-Atlantic District sent 150 Bibles to Nigeria at the request of Rev. Sylvanus Maduka.

MUCH MORE THAN DOLLARS AND CENTS

Stewardship is a word that makes many churchgoers cringe. The moment the word is uttered from the pulpit the red flags go up: "The pastor is going to talk about money again!"

But when you look at the definition of the word and when you dare to look at the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you'll discover there's much more to stewardship than dollars and cents. It is, more appropriately, a case of covenant and sense: a covenant of love and a sense of commitment. Y'all wondering what that means? Read on!

The journal entry at MCC of Acadiana for December 26, 1982, reads: "There were only two of us for service today. This had to have been the most discouraging Sunday ever. The day after the celebration of the birth of Jesus; two people came to praise God's name. I hope and pray that MCCA has a revitalization soon. The spirit in and for this church has dwindled to almost non-existence. Those of us who love and participate in MCCA services and functions have a true love and need for Jesus our Christ. I only hope that God's love and Spirit will grow within this church..."

MCC of Acadiana was a very small study group at the time the entry was made. It had joined the Fellowship in May 1981, and during

continued on page 13

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the Christmas season of 1982 there were about 15 regular participants. Art Hebert, who wrote those discouraging words, knew that the outlook for the young church did not seem very promising. There had been numerous other Sundays when attendance had been very low. Monthly averages had been hanging between 8 and 14. It would have been so easy to give up, but Art and Larry held a "service" that December 26th. They shared with God and with each other. They prayed. They knew that God had already provided the victory in Acadiana. They knew they had to claim that victory.

It is now a year and a half later. The Metropolitan Community Church of Acadiana, also known as l'Eglise Communautaire Metropolitaine de l'Acadien, is alive and well in Christ, its Liberator. In November 1983 we moved into our own building (Sure, we carry a mortgage!). We have 58 active members; Art is no longer our treasurer but our first Student Clergy; and the Board of Elders just approved our Charter application! What happened?

It is indeed a story of covenant and sense. A story of testimony to the miraculous power of God, which can be true for any MCC willing to take God at God's Word and run with it.

Let me introduce you to our church. We are located in the city of Lafayette, in the heart of French Louisiana, known as Acadiana. The city has a population of about 85,000 and we are very proud of our Cajun heritage: "Laissez les bons temps rouler!" At first, our church was primarily a college group with students from USL. Early worship was held in living rooms, city parks and Gay bars.

The average age of the group was about 23 years. Two lay worship coordinators from MCC of the Resurrection in Houston served MCCA during the first year and a half. First Joyce and later Phil came in on weekends only. But in the fall of 1982 it became evident to our small group that God meant for a church to boldly step out in faith. "Put me to the test..."

The weekly income of our church was just enough to pay for the small office which was rented and packed with folding chairs, hymn books, piano, filing cabinet, coffee maker, and a door which served as the top of a make-shift desk. More than four people in the office was impossible! Worship services were held in the conference room of the office building.

Clarke Friesen, who was our acting district coordinator then, supported the small group in their bold step of faith. We didn't know where it would come from, but we had decided to see if it was true that you could put God to the test.

It only took a few weeks to raise enough money to fly a pastor in for an interview! And on March 15, 1983 (less than three months after those discouraging words!!!) our first pastor/worship coordinator and his family arrived in Lafayette. Pastor Jon, Angelo and Alden were soon introduced to crawfish, gumbo, jambalaya and the unique Cajun French language. Mais oui, cher! Our hopes were lifted high as God poured out upon us blessings of abundance. The bills got paid every month. And there was even enough left to send Pastor Jon and Angelo to Toronto, all expenses paid.

By the end of July we ran out of chairs. People had to sit on the floor to worship. One of our members asked the Board's permission to start and ad-hoc building committee. A small jar was placed on the literature table and coins and bills started a slow-growing building fund. It was meant to be for the future...we thought. But God had different plans. The small jar became a five-gallon water jug and in the middle of August, Pastor Jon noticed a for sale/lease/rent sign on a red brick building down the street. Several Board members accompanied him to see the interior. It was perfect,...but an impossible dream.

The owner asked for a down-payment of $25,000 and a 10-year mortgage. We offered $10,000 down and asked for a 20-year mortgage. Talk about being bold, we only had $500 in the building fund!!! We pushed the owner rather hard and even had him agree to a closing date three months later. We bought ourselves three months to raise $9,500!

During those months we worked very hard. Our congregation had grown to about 30 people now. We washed cars, baked pies, cooked, knitted, crocheted, and did about everything else you can think of. Some fund raisers worked well, others flopped. At the end of the three months we had raised almost $5,000, far short of the goal. Had we failed?

We had done our best. We had tried. We guessed that God had spoken and didn't want us to have the building. And when it looked as if we would even lose the $5,000 we had raised (to get out of the purchase agreement), God revealed to us what we had done. For three months we had gotten so busy working on a building...We had put all our efforts on building, building, building. We had stopped <u>being</u> the church! The church is people! We had neglected our ministry of love and reconciliation and had become "building hungry." At a congregational meeting we confessed that to God and we ended the meeting in praise, turning everything over to our Creator. We had also decided to turn the $5,000 over to the owner since we had broken the contract and wanted to appease him so he wouldn't sue us. We were willing to let go...

On November 6, 1983, we held our first service in the new home that God had given to us. The own-

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er had dropped the down-payment to $7,000; our district floated us a loan for the difference. What once was a grocery market was now dedicated as a House of Worship, a place of prayer and meditation for ALL people.

Suddenly our community is taking us seriously. For the first time has the media covered our existence. Our pastor lectures regularly on the USL campus and church members have participated in a radio series on AIDS. We hold weekly sign classes, celebrate midweek Communion on Wednesdays, have choir practice once a week, weekly rap nights and Inquirers classes.

In May we opened the Chrysalis Center, a substance free drop-in center, staffed with trained crisis and phone counselors. On Mondays we have the MCCA School of Theology for the training of student clergy, deacons and lay-leaders in cooperation with Samaritan College. We recently "gave birth" to our first child, MCC of Baton Rouge, our State Capitol, which is 50 miles East on Interstate 10! And it looks like we are pregnant again, this time jointly with MCCR in Houston as we begin to help brothers and sisters in Beaumont, TX, found an MCC. O yes, we pay a monthly mortgage payment of more than $1,000. How can we do all that?

We can't. None of us can or do take credit for any of it. We are, however, starting to discover what real stewardship is all about. And it is definitely not a case of dollars and cents. It isn't something that stops at 10% either! God is allowing us to discover that the Word is something that may be taken at full face value. In Malachi we read: "Put me to the test..." We did and we do. As members of this special Fellowship, God calls us into a covenant of love. In order for that covenant to be effective we must be willing to make a total commitment to the One who has taught us love: Jesus, the Christ. We understood the message which is found in the special resolution passed in Toronto last summer. When a waiter or waitress serves you well, you leave a 15% tip. Does the waitress serve us better than God?

We tested God by sending our UFMCC tithe always from the top. We tested God by increasing our District tithes to 5% voluntarily. We tested God by setting aside 3% each month into a Deacon's Fund. We tested God by setting aside 2% each month for World Church Extension. We tested God, and God won!

In September, the Rev. Elder Troy Perry visited Acadiana for the first time to present us our Charter. We accepted it in thanksgiving and offered it up in joy to the glory of God! From the heart of Acadiana, we send our love, which is God's "Ce que l'Esprit Saint produit, c'est l'Amour, la Joie, la Paix, la Patience, la Bienveillance, la Bonte, la Fidelite, la Douceur et la Maitrise de Soi." (Galatians 5: 22-23a).

"COMING OUT TO YOUR PARENTS"

"Coming Out to Your Parents" is a 16-page booklet published for Gay men and Lesbians who are considering coming out to their parents. The booklet, published by Philadelphia Parents of Gays (POG), identifies six stages most parents go through when they learn of their Gay/Lesbian child's sexual orientation.

The six stages of understanding (shock, denial, guilt, anger, personal decision making and true acceptance) are described, along with specific ways young adults can assist their parents in each of these stages. The author, the father of a Gay son, identifies the stages based on his personal experience and hundreds of other parents who have attended Philadelphia POG. The booklet begins by raising 12 questions that need to be considered before one comes out to his or her parents. It offers an annotated list of resources about coming out to parents; it also provides an appendix of books and pamphlets to give to one's parents. A list of over 100 parent groups/contacts in 47 states is provided. These parent groups are members of the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (Parents FLAG), whose headquarters is in Los Angeles.

For a free single copy send a self-addressed, stamped business envelope to POG, P O Box 15711, Philadelphia, PA 19103. (Address the envelope as you wish; no additional marks will be added by POG.) Additional copies are 15¢ each; $10 per 100 includes postage.

PERSONAL STORIES REQUESTED

Request for personal stories from Mary V. Borhek, author of MY SON ERIC and COMING OUT TO PARENTS:

Currently I am working on a book about how the church ought to be dealing with Lesbians and Gay men. In this book I hope to use the following types of personal stories of Gay men and Lesbians:

Personal spiritual experiences, whether your first experiential contact with Creator, Redeemer or Spirit, or a later experience--some time when the Divine Being seemed very close to you in some way.

Personal answers to prayer.

Personal experiencing of the Spirit's call to the pastorate.

Stories of how your mainline denominational congregation, or your evangelical congregation (or a congregation with which you are thoroughly familiar) is dealing creatively with integrating Lesbians and Gay men into the congregation.

continued on page 15

continued from page 14

If you have such a story in one or more of these categories, would you write about it in 100 to 2,000 words for each such story, and mail it to me:

Mary V. Borhek
Box 13331
St. Paul, MN 55113

If it fits the needs of the book, I could of course use other names, other parts of the country, some altered facts (type of job held, name of school or college, etc.) so that your identity need not be made known.

Or if you prefer, you can be identified. I will acknowledge receipt of all submissions, but cannot return the manuscript submitted unless you enclose self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage. If I use your story I will consult you about any changes I might make in wording, etc.

I should have all stories in my hands by December 31, 1984.

MCC NEW YORK GIVES BIRTH TO BROOKLYN PARISH

MCC New York proudly announces that it will give birth to a Brooklyn parish extension in the fall of 1984. The new church will be called MCC Brooklyn and will provide spiritual and social services to the growing Lesbian and Gay community in Brooklyn.

Rev. Susan Eenigenburg, Clergy on Staff, MCC NY, is laying the groundwork now to prepare for regular worship services which will begin Sunday, October 7. Susan has been authorized to begin this new church by the Northeast District of our denomination, the UFMCC, and the new work also received the unanimous endorsement of the MCC NY Board of Directors.

The unofficial Southwest District Retreat was again a successful event. This outside worship service was only one of many moving, spiritual experiences during the weekend.

continued from page 5
the pages of questions they compiled regarding sexuality and spirituality, there were no question regarding aids, the Gay health crisis, or the Lesbian health crisis with Lupus. This prompted a discussion about health issues and related faith issues and there was obvious interest in this area.

I believe many of us feel the urgency, UFMCC should be in the forefront of theological interpretation of what is happening in the Gay and Lesbian Community. The place for that to happen institutionally is the Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission. I personally applaud their work so far and trust that they will begin more focussed work on this issue.

> That the Spiritual Life and Clergy Care Program and its Chaplains become proficient in pastoral care in the aids crisis as a resource for us all.

This has happened. Thank God for the Rev. Nancy Radclyffe!

> EDUCATION - The UFMCC and its local churches will provide continuing accessible education regarding AIDS and other health-related issues in a sex-positive, Gay-positive and wellness positive manner to members of the Fellowship and the communities in which we live. To this end, we ask that Samaritan Education Ministries, in cooperation with the Fellowship Offices and publications, provide resources for such education. In addition, the Board of Elders will explore options for the efficient and reliable flow of accurate information regarding AIDS.

Samaritan has offered one course on "Dealing with aids in UFMCC." I taught it, and was pleased for the opportunity to organize materials for such a course. It was a summer session weekend seminar and unfortunately, only two people came. I was asked the next week to come and share for an hour or so over dinner with the Student Clergy in the Orientation Program and I believe that I was able to give out some valuable information, in terms of reading material and resources. "The efficient and reliable flow of accurate information regarding aids" is important; there is a lot of mythology around aids. But please do not rely on me to do all the Fellowship education about aids. There are others in the Fellowship with expertise.

> POLITICAL ACTIVISM - The UFMCC and its member churches will actively participate in educating elected officials on the local, regional and national levels regarding the AIDS crisis, including (but not limited to) monies for research, legal issues and availability of government administrated services, especially for Third World persons who are disproportionately hurt by this epidemic.

A can only say that I hope political activism around aids is happening and yes, Third World people are disproportionately hurt by this epidemic. I can see that every time I go to the hospital or to a support group.

> SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - The UFMCC and its local churches will begin asking some difficult but important questions about sexuality and social responsibility that the AIDS crisis elicits. We especially urge our Gay brothers clergy and lay, to spend time discussing the facts, the fears, the feelings and the options for responsible sexual sexual relating during this health crisis. Further, we urge our whole fellowship to reject the heartless social "Pariah-ing" of persons with AIDS (or suspected of having AIDS) and their friends and families. Finally we also call for the formation of a Lesbian blood bank in the name of UFMCC for the use of persons with AIDS, which the Board of Elders will take steps to initiate.

I believe what the elders are saying here is that we all need to really discuss what is happening to us because of this disease. There is a lot to talk about and this talk needs to be happening, especially among the worried well. What does this lethal disease, that is apparently sexually transmitted, mean to our community and to our church?

We must help keep the issue in the forefront of our concern: There is a real tendency to feel that the aids crisis has peaked, and the panic is over. On the contrary, statistics show that it is increasing at alarming rates. According to Supervisor Ed Edelman, "In Los Angeles County alone, the number of aids cases reported continues to increase at a rate of approximately one new case each day."

Regarding the Lesbian Blood Bank, I know many women from MCC who have contributed generously to Lesbian Blood Banks in this crisis. But there is nothing being done institutionally by the Fellowship or by the Elders. And this is the core of the problem I believe: on an individual level, people with aids are being ministered to and people in leadership positions in the Fellowship are taking real responsibility for ministering in situations involving aids; but there is very little happening on a Fellowship level. I understand that the Elders have discussed aids at their meetings and they are planning a day at General Conference in Sacramento next summer to focus on the aids crisis. Meanwhile, individual elders are being present to me and other PWA's. There is no doubt in my mind that they are concerned; the question is how to implement that concern on an

continued on page 17

continued from page 16

institutional level.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that implementation of this resolution shall be a priority issue at every level in the Fellowship.

This is not the first resolution in the history of the Fellowship that has not been followed to the letter. We need to practice self-acceptance and forgiveness here too, realizing that we are a church of fallible human beings who cannot take care of everything all at once. But we must also take responsibility where this is concerned. Whatever questions about the effectiveness of our process this may evoke, the aids crisis is real. It is hitting UFMCC now.

In response to my articles, I have received phone calls from all over the United States from people in MCC who have aids, suspect they do, or are in relationship with someone who has it. Many of these people do not want it known, which is understandable. Not everyone is as promiscuous with their feelings and experiences as I am. But it does raise questions about trust levels in our Fellowship. And it does show that aids <u>is</u> indeed hitting us now, more pervasively than perhaps we all realized. We have to pay attention.

How we respond in the aids crisis will be watched by many people in and out of the community. But we shouldn't do it for that reason; we should be present in the aids crisis because we are a Christian church and as a Christian church, we are called to be present wherever the quality of life is threatened.

What can one person do? Take one suggestion from the resolutions passed at General Conference and make it happen. Be present; just be there for some one with aids. Use your imagination. Think about what you would like a friend to do or be for you if you got aids.

Falwell Issues $5,000 Challenge

REV. JERRY FALWELL CHALLENGES JERRY SLOAN TO PRODUCE A TAPE OF FALWELL SAYING THE METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES ARE, "BRUTE BEASTS...A VILE AND SATANIC SYSTEM" WHICH WILL "ONE DAY BE UTTERLY ANNIHILATED AND THERE WILL BE A CELEBRATION IN HEAVEN."

Rev. Jerry Falwell issued his $5,000 challenge during KCRA-TV live morning show, "Look Who's Talking" on July 13, 1984. The show is hosted by Jim Finnerty and Sue Pearson.

Jerry Sloan, a local Gay activist and former schoolmate of Falwell, asked Falwell why in view of his statement that we should "Love the sinner hate the sin," he had made the statements concerning the Metropolitan Community Churches, a Christian church with 85% of its communicants Gay and Lesbian.

These statements were made on an "Old Time Gospel Hour" telecast shown on KCSO-TV and KRBK-TV on March 11, 1984. They are also available from the Old Time Gospel Hour on their tape #595.

During the "Look Who's Talking" show, Falwell interrupted Sloan several times denying the statements, saying it was, "a lie!"

Sloan countered by saying he had the statements on tape.

Falwell continued to deny the statements saying the tapes did not exist. He then challenged Sloan to produce the tape saying he would give Sloan $5,000 if he could.

On Wednesday, July 18, 1984, Sloan took two tapes to KCRA-TV for an interview with Mike Boyd. Rev. Falwell has yet to produce the $5,000.

Sloan says, "Rev. Falwell is conducting a hate campaign against the Lesbian and Gay citizens of this country. His mild statements concerning Gay/Lesbian people while he was in California prior to the Democratic Convention are a smoke screen. The statements made by Falwell concerning Metropolitan Community Churches put him in the

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continued from page 8

challenge you to work and to vote for the candidates and issues you believe most adequately represent God's will. Perhaps you will witness the sacramental nature of political activity, and experience God's presence in the struggle.

We can avoid American political tragedies at the polls this November, but only if we recognize and respond to our obligations in the nexus of politics and faith. If politics gets the upper hand in that nexus, it will become a cross on which our hopes will be crucified yet again. If our faith speaks compassionately in that nexus, we'll be able to take people off crosses and get on to the resurrection. And we'll offer a more authentic witness of God's Realm as citizens by God's grace.

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continued from page 3

lla and Crispin Mata, Worship Coordinator of ICM-Cuernavaca, which has an average of 8-12 people meeting every Sunday.

There is also talk of a new ICM in Tijuana, Mexico. Exploration of the feasibility of such a group was begun by Rev. Bjorn Marcussen of MCC-Long Beach in cooperation with Rev. Jose Mojica. Pray for our Churches and sisters and brothers in Mexico!

continued from page 17

same class as Minister Farrakhan, Rev. Ian Pasley and Father Coughlin. Because of this hate campaign, President Reagan should disavow himself of Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority."

Jerry Sloan is a former licensed clergy person with the Metropolitan Community Churches. He is the founder of MCC churches in Des Moines and Wichita. Sloan is a member of the River City Democratic Club and a member of the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Week Committee. This year he has received community service awards from two different Lesbian/Gay organizations.

Both Falwell and Sloan attended the Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO., between the years of 1954 and 1956.

Video tapes of "Look Who's Talking" and audio tapes of the "Old Time Gospel Hour" are available.

The following is a transcript from "Look Who's Talking" broadcast on KCRA-TV, Sacramento, CA., on July 13, 1984. The conversation is between Rev. Jerry Falwell and Jerry Sloan. "Look Who's Talking" hosts are Jim Finnerty and Sue Pearson.

JF: Let me ask you now because you have been vocal on your stand on homosexuality, as has the Moral Majority, how do you react to that the Gays say that you would just as well see them off the face of the earth?

FAL: Well they're wrong, of course, not all say that. But we, we do believe homosexuality is an immorality as we do promiscuous heterosexuality. But that is not our main message and that is not why we went to San Francisco. We went there because the Democrats had chosen it as the site for the convention.

JS: Hi, Jerry it is good to see you.

FAL: Another Jerry, I notice.

JS: Jerry Sloan from Baptist Bible College.

FAL: I remember you well.

JS: We went to school together, Jerry and I did. I am a Gay man. And recently on a broadcast of yours, telecast of your.

FAL: Your hair's turned loose and mine's turned gray.

JS: Right, gray and loose. Ah, recently on a broadcast you made a statement about Metropolitan Community Church in which you said they were brute beasts, part of a vile and satanic system--

FAL: I never said that! It's and absolute lie!

JS: Well, you certainly did! I've got a tape of it.

FAL: Well, I'd like to hear the tape. Play it right now and I'll acknowledge it.

JS: I don't have it in my possession right now--

FAL: Of course you don't have it because it doesn't exist!

JS: Well, it certainly does!

FAL: May I tell you that while I believe--

JF: Let me clear up, Metropolitan Community Church is what for those who don't know?

FAL: It's a Gay church.

JS: It's a Christian church that accepts every person into their membership.

FAL: Do you have any non-Gays in the church?

JS: Sure, Sure they do.

FAL: You do?

JS: But, anyway, you said, you also said, that, there would be rejoicing in heaven when they would be annihilated.

FAL: That's an absolute lie!, Jerry. And I'll threaten you, I give $5,000, I'm saying this on television, if you can produce that tape!

JS: Hallelujah

FAL: (Laughter)

JF: What is your position? What have you said about this particular church?

FAL: I have said, the Metropolitan Community Church has to deny the inerrancy of the Scripture and the Diety of Christ, and the teachings of the Word of God in order to call itself a church. Because the Word--Romans one, ah very clear, Jerry knows that, he learned it where I did--ah, the all the Word of God teaches that the homosexual relationship is a perverted life style. The words reprobate, abomination, etc., are all used and there's no question about it when one practices that lifestyle, which only humans do, animals don't, it is is not, ah, God cannot condone that. While God loves the offender, God hates the offense.

Here is Jerry Falwell's complete comments concerning the Metropolitan Community Churches on March 11, 1984:

"Look at the Metropolitan Community Church today, the Gay Church, almost accepted into the World Council of Churches recently, the National Council of Churches, almost. The vote was against them, but they will try again and again until they get in and the tragedy is that they would get one vote because they are spoken of here in Jude as being brute beasts, that is, going to the baser lust of the flesh to live immorally. And so, Jude decribes this as apostacy. Thank God, this vile and satanic system will one day be utterly annihilated and there will be a celebration in Heaven!"

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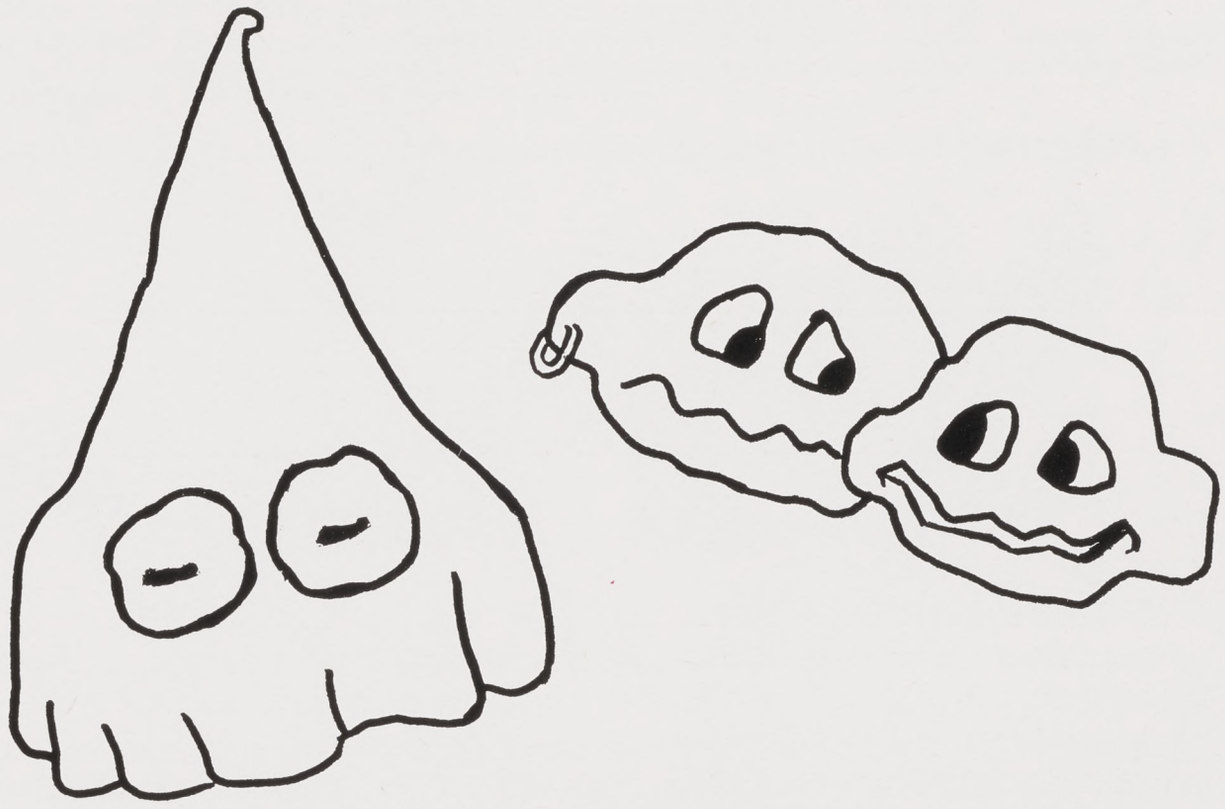
Mixed Blessings

Cory Allison



AND I SAY THAT'S NOT A HOLLOWEEN GHOST!

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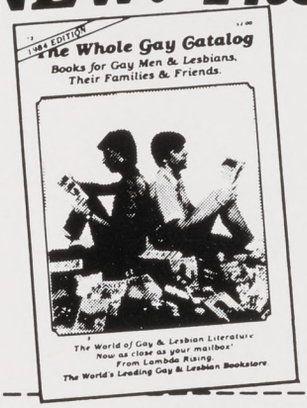
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EXCEL

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November	02-04	San Francisco, CA
March	15-17	McKenzie Bridge, OR

For more information on any of these weekends, contact one of the local teams in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Houston, Portland (OR), or Detroit. Or write Keith Apple, 2 Valley Circle, Mill Valley, CA 94941.

"Look at the Metropolitan Community Church today – the Gay Church – almost accepted into the World Council . . . National Council of Churches. Almost. The vote was against them. But they will try again and again until they get in. And the tragedy is that they would get one vote. Because they are spoken of here in Jude as being brute beasts – that is going to the baser lust of the flesh to live immorally and so Jude describes this as apostasy. Thank God this vile and satanic system will one day be utterly annihilated and there will be a celebration in heaven."

From a Sermon on the TV Program "Old Time Gospel Hour" by Rev. Jerry Falwell, President, Moral Majority.

No, Jerry, that's not what Metropolitan Community Church is like because:

We are a caring, loving group of people.

We have created a 60-minute television documentary to confront those kind of lies, and others made by people like you who preach that we, as Lesbian and Gay males are brute beasts, not people.

Our documentary portrays the lives of women and men in the Gay community praying for and struggling to secure freedom and liberation for all people . . . teachers . . . Cuban Refugees . . . Third World People . . . persons with AIDS . . . Gay parents . . . the churched and unchurched . . . youth and seniors . . . sisters and brothers around the world who seek peace and prosperity. We have shared on tape the truth that spirituality and sexuality are compatible.

Mr. Falwell, I am asking my friends for help to show it like it is. I am asking them to please send their tax-deductible donations to me to get this message on the air. And it will be on the air because my friends care.

GOD, GAYS & THE GOSPEL: This is OUR story.

A television presentation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

YES! I would like to answer Jerry!

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